

How to Recover From a Hurtful Split



By Melanie Mar

When CupidsPulse.com asked me to write an article on this topic, I stopped for a minute to reflect upon two emails I received this week, both requesting my help: one from a man who was struggling terribly to let go of his ex-girlfriend and move on, and the other from a lady with the subject “heartbroken.” The end of a relationship can be extremely difficult, and I never underestimate the pain of a breakup. In severe cases, it is truly debilitating, causing mental anguish and physical turmoil, affecting your health, and leading to weight loss and other associated illnesses.

Of course, the degree of distress is dependent on how a relationship ends. For example, if both of you have come to the conclusion that the relationship has “run its course” and

each have apathy for the other, then the most likely feeling you'll have is melancholy. You'll wish each other well and mean it. In these cases, I recommend doing things that bring you joy to counteract the blues: dance, sing, surround yourself with friends, whatever makes you happy.

There's also the "chipping away" of a relationship from bickering, lack of sex, lack of respect, etc. If these things have ultimately led to the end of your relationship, then relief is usually the first emotion felt. During this stage, I suggest doing things to rediscover yourself, like taking up a hobby or interest, pampering yourself, or taking some much needed "me" time.

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If your relationship ends because of betrayal or immoral or unethical behavior, you will experience deep agony. The ending is usually swift and extremely hard to comprehend. Understanding the process (and yes, it is a process) will make it easier for you. Know that what you are going through is not uncommon and that having the right tools in your tool belt will assist you as you handle your loss.

Here are some other feelings you may experience during a hurtful split:

Pain can be both emotional and physical. I always tell my clients that "pain indicates change is needed or change is in progress." Do not push away the pain; instead, *feel it*. If you deny the feeling, you're only prolonging the inevitable. People ruminate when they are in emotional distress, which is perfectly fine for a short time. However, if extended, it can cause sickness.

Within weeks, you have to move on from the feel-think, feel-think, feel-think merry-go-round and do something positive to make it better. Remember that the way out of any negative thought is to follow it with a positive action.

Anger is a very frequently expressed emotion. As a certified transactional analysis, I use “child” and “adult” as forms of communication styles. With that in mind, there are four types of anger:

1. Frustration is created from a deep dissatisfaction from unresolved problems or unfulfilled needs.

2. Resentment is a bitter feeling of persistent ill will.

3. Denial is a defense mechanism in which confrontation with reality is avoided by denying the existence of the problem.

The three angers above are all child angers and are not healthy in the aid of moving on and letting go.

4. Indignant is adult anger in its simplest form, and it merely means you are logically angry about the situation. It's perfectly healthy to display your anger if done with facts and reasoning and not for an extensive amount of time.

Sadness comes after the pain has eased and the anger has subsided. It is, of course, sad to acknowledge that someone you loved deeply betrayed your relationship and that the future plans you had together will not happen. You miss that person and the special moments you shared. It's okay to mourn; in fact, it's normal, and it would be highly unusual if you didn't.

Just make sure that this phase doesn't continue for an extended period. Remember to keep reminding yourself the reason why your relationship ended.

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Acceptance is the last stage. There will be a day when you wake up and realize that it's over and that you survived. It didn't kill you, but it did make you stronger. When looking back at the relationship, you understand completely that it wasn't what you initially thought and that your ex was less

than you deserve. It's the relationships that don't last forever that teach us the lessons that will.

You now have what I call a "clear head, clear heart" – both of which are necessary to start dating again. So get out there and enjoy the excitement of meeting someone new. You never know what it might lead to!

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